January 13, 2003

Public Notice for 401 Certification

Sonoma County Department of Transportation and Public Works,
Wohler Bridge Seismic Retrofit Project, WDID No. 1B0216WNSO

Sonoma County

On September 30, 2002, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the Sonoma County Department of Transportation and Public Works requesting Federal Clean Water Act Section 401 Certification. The application covers disturbances to waters of the United States associated with a seismic retrofit of Wohler Bridge in Sonoma County. The application was deemed complete on October 4, 2002.

The Wholer Bridge over the Russian River is located on Wohler Road in central Sonoma County, approximately 59 miles upstream from the ocean, and 10 miles northwest of Santa Rosa. Approximately 875 square feet of permanent fill is associated with the proposed project. The permanent fill would be the result of the placement of footings and piles at piers 3 and 4. In addition, approximately 10,000 square feet of temporary fill would be placed in and along the Russian River to construct a work pad 400 feet long by 25 feet wide.

To seismically retrofit the bridge, work on the abutments, bridge deck, and piers is required. The work will require drilling three (5 feet in diameter) CIDH piles in the road prism behind the abutment that will have cable restrainers connecting the new CIDH piles to the approach span. Fill will be placed in the Russian River to create a temporary work pad, installing steel pipe piles, and constructing a pile cap around the existing piers connecting them to the new piles.

Piers 3 and 4 will have 24 inch steel pipe piles added to their existing footings, with a new footing cap placed over the new piles and connected to the existing footing cap. Some excavation will be required for the new footing extensions. At piers 2-5, existing pier caps will be widened and shear keys will be added. To drive steel piles for the footing retrofit, large equipment will need to access pier 4 in the flowing portion of the river.

Work on the abutments will occur from the road. Two access points to the river will be needed to perform the work on piers 2-5. One access point will be to the northwest quadrant of the bridge from an existing dirt road off the parking lot at the West End of the bridge. This parking lot and dirt road will provide access to piers 2,3, and with fill in the river, pier 4. Access for the work at pier 5 will be from the East End of the bridge from a small dirt road that leads under the bridge.

After the project is completed all disturbed areas, not including the access roads, will be regraded to match the preproject topography, with erosion control measures.

The following mitigation measures will be incorporated in the project to reduce or eliminate potential impacts of the seismic retrofit project:

- Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be implemented to control erosion on the access road and disturbed slope.
- All pruning and removal will be the minimum necessary to construct the project. The vegetation that needs to be removed will be cut at grade allowing for resprouting.
- Imported, clean, river-run material will be used for the temporary fill placed in the river to provide access to pier 4. Material will be placed in the river by pushing it out from the bank in a way that will not impound water and trap fish.
- The spoils generated from the excavation of footings will be removed from the river channel and disposed of in a permitted manner.
- To prevent the excavated area from filling with water and prevent turbid water from entering the river, this water either will be pumped upslope for disposal on nearby uplands in a way that would prevent it from flowing back into the river, or pumped directly into tanks and disposed of away from the river channel. Any water that may have a high pH endangering fish or aquatic life will be handled in the same manner.

This project is exempt from provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Title 14, California Code of Regulations, Section 15269(e) as a bridge seismic retrofit project.

At this time the Regional Water Board is in the process of reviewing the proposed project regarding the issuance of the 401 Certification Permit. In addition, the Regional Water Board will consider all comments received during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter. If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Mona Dougherty at (707) 570-3761 or by email at dougm@rb1.swrcb.ca.gov.

(MSD_wohlerbridge)